

## **Overview of the FDA Food Safety and Defense Workshop**

### **Background**

The FDA Southeast Food Safety and Defense Workshop is a collaborative effort between the FDA Southeast Region Retail Food Specialists, Atlanta District Office Public Affairs Specialist JoAnn M. Pittman, Georgia Environmental Health Association, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Metro Atlanta county health departments, and FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition's Office of Food Defense, Communication and Emergency Response.

The first FDA SER Food Safety and Defense Workshop was delivered in 2006. The workshop has been repeated each year since then. There are plans to deliver the fourth annual workshop in Sept 2010. Thus far, the SER has delivered the workshops exclusively in the Atlanta area. Although delivery of the workshop on an annual basis has enhanced FDA's outreach to the retail food industry community, our ability to expand the workshop regionally has been hampered by lack of funding. If funding allows, we plan to expand the workshop to other states in the region during FY '11.

Using funding obtained from CFSAN's Office of Food Defense, Communication and Emergency Response, supplemented by regional funds, the FDA Northeast Region Retail Food Specialists and Public Affairs Specialist Mary Yebba delivered the first such workshop in the Northeast U.S. on September 28, 2010.

### **Workshop Audience, Purpose, and Objectives**

The principle audience for the workshop has been owners, managers, and food employees of small independent retail and foodservice establishments. This group was chosen as the target audience because they represent the large majority of retail and foodservice establishments. Also, large chain operations generally have quality assurance programs in place to address food safety and defense concerns; small, independent operations do not. In order to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors and ensure that food served or sold in these operations is safe from intentional contamination, it is important that the Agency convey food safety and defense principles in terms that can be easily understood and applied daily in these operations.

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- To enhance the food safety and defense knowledge of owners, managers, and food employees of small independent retail and foodservice establishments in an interactive, non-threatening, easy-to-understand format.
- To provide owners, managers, and food employees with tools to help them apply the concepts learned in the workshop to the operation of their businesses on a daily basis.

The training provided to food employees is often heavily focused on how to comply with regulatory requirements. The format of this training is usually one dimensional with the food employees observing a Power Point presentation, reading standard operating procedures or code requirements, and maybe viewing videos. There is usually very little hands-on demonstration provided, and there is little focus on the reasons why following the regulatory requirement is important and consequences for not.

The FDA Food Safety and Defense Workshop covers in detail the consequences of not carrying out safe food handling practices to control the five foodborne illness risk factors as a precursor to helping participants understand the regulatory requirements.

### **Measuring Knowledge Pre and Post Workshop**

At the beginning of the workshop, participants will complete an anonymous questionnaire relative to the status of the current status of the management systems in place to address food safety and defense concerns. Following the completion of the workshop, participants will complete the same questionnaire. Pooled data from the pre- and post-workshop questionnaires will be used to gauge the overall change in understanding of food safety and defense before and after the workshop. Example questions on the questionnaire include: "Do you conduct background checks on your employees? Do you take temperatures of cooked food? The actual assessment form used is available from FDA.

### **Workshop Agenda**

The workshop agenda is as follows:

8:30	Registration
9:00	Welcome
9:10	Pre-Workshop Assessment
9:20	The Headline You Don't Want to Make (Food Liability/Protecting Your Business)
10:00	Break
10:15	Controlling Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Your Establishment
12:00	Lunch (provided)
12:45	Controlling Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Your Establishment (cont'd)
1:15	BE ALERT: Defending Your Food Against Intentional Contamination
1:35	Break
1:50	Protecting Your Food Against Intentional Contamination
2:40	Post-Workshop Assessment/Workshop Evaluation
3:00	Adjourn

### **Workshop – Room Set Up and Format**

The workshop is usually held in a large ballroom. We usually set the maximum number of attendees to 60 to allow for a more interactive environment. The size of the workshop has also been contained by resources.

There is a main session, set up classroom, theatre, or herringbone style (depending on the space), with enough chairs for the total number of participants. You will need a screen, LCD projector, and computer. Depending on the room, this can be set up in the middle.

Around the periphery of the room (or if funding permits, in separate rooms altogether), there needs to be five breakout sessions, set up theatre style or U-shape (depending on space) with a table for displaying learning aids in the front of the group of participants. Each station corresponds to the control of the five foodborne illness risk factors as follows:

- Station 1 - Cooling/Holding Temperatures
- Station 2 - Cooking
- Station 3 - Prevention of Cross-Contamination
- Station 4 - Employee Health and Hygiene
- Station 5 - Approved Sources (you may opt to set up approved sources as a display only and not have an active breakout session. This permits more time for covering the other risk factors.)

An FDA Regional Food Specialist or other facilitator/instructor is assigned to each station.

The welcome and pre-workshop assessment are done as a large group in the main session. Before the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation usually done by Patti Waller of Marler Clark, which is also done as a large group in the main session, play the C. bot testimonial from the FDA oral culture project (available from FDA). Following the audio, explain to the participants that this is why following safe handling practices is important. People can get hurt and lose function for the rest of their lives - can even die - for a simple mistake. Likewise, businesses can be closed and lose their reputation for causing an illness. This affects their ability to make a living. This provides the lead-in to the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation.

Following the “Headline You Don’t Want to Make” presentation and break, explain to the participants that they will be divided into five groups for the next part of the workshop. Have the participants sound off 1 to 5 (or 1 to 4, depending on whether you cover approved sources as a breakout session) so they know which station to go to first. Explain that the purpose of this part of the workshop is to learn about the five risk foodborne illness risk factors – what they are, how to control them, and why controlling them is important.

The participants then report to their respective station. Each station is 15 minutes (if there are 5 stations) or 18 minutes (if there are 4 stations). It is important for one of the facilitators to “keep time.” Once the participants are seated in the station, facilitators

follow the lesson plan for their respective station. **The lesson plans for each station are available from FDA.** You will note that the lesson plans call for the use of props, demonstrations, and in some cases, materials from the FDA oral culture project.

At the end of the session, the groups go to the next station (have them rotate clockwise or tell them that “1 goes to 2,” “2 goes to 3,” etc.). This is repeated until all the groups have attended each station (until about 1:15 with a lunch break in the middle).

After the breakout sessions, the next part of the workshop is done as a large group in the main session and focuses on food defense. FDA Public Affairs Specialist presents an overview of ALERT. This is followed by a break and a “rubber meets the road” presentation on food defense.

The participants then take the post-workshop assessment and complete their workshop evaluations. When they turn these in, give them their certificate and thank them for coming.